



# CONGRESSMAN HENRY A. WAXMAN NEWS

1721 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
8425 WEST 3rd STREET

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515  
LOS ANGELES, CALIF. 90048

202-225-3976  
213-651-1040

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Contact: Sara Kestenbaum (202) 225-7984  
Helen Siegel (213) 651-1040

## WAXMAN SEEKS ALTERNATIVES TO NURSING HOME CARE

Last week Congressman Henry A. Waxman (D-Los Angeles) convened a special hearing of the House Subcommittee on Health and the Environment to explore alternatives to convalescent hospitals for the care of the elderly, chronically ill and disabled people.

Waxman said the hearing was prompted by his personal conviction that

"Too many of our nation's elderly are forced to enter nursing homes unnecessarily. Current federal and state health programs undermine the family and are inefficient in the use of health service dollars. My subcommittee will be examining community based services as a possible answer."

Witnesses who appeared before the Waxman panel unanimously asserted that many people will be able to avoid or postpone convalescent hospital care if funds are made available for adequate home care support services. Services most needed are home nursing services, medical supplies and equipment designed for home use, and easy access to key health professionals.

Waxman said,

"Why hospitalize an alert and competent person who with some outside help (and at a fraction of the cost of a nursing home) can continue to live an independent life in his or her own home or apartment? Many people desperately need the services of a convalescent hospital with round-the-clock skilled nursing care. However, it is cruel and

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wasteful for government reimbursement policy to force people who do not need hospital care to be institutionalized."

Among the witnesses who appeared before the subcommittee hearing included actress Jennifer Jones Simon, a national leader in care for the chronically ill, Beverlee A. Myers, Director of the California Department of Health Services and Sandra King, Director of the Senior Services Department of the Jewish Family Services.

Congressman Waxman, Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Health and the Environment concluded the hearing by pledging swift action by his committee on HR 6194. The measure designed to provide federal encouragement for states to provide home health care services to the elderly and disabled.

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